

10-11-2017

Montana Kaimin, October 11, 2017

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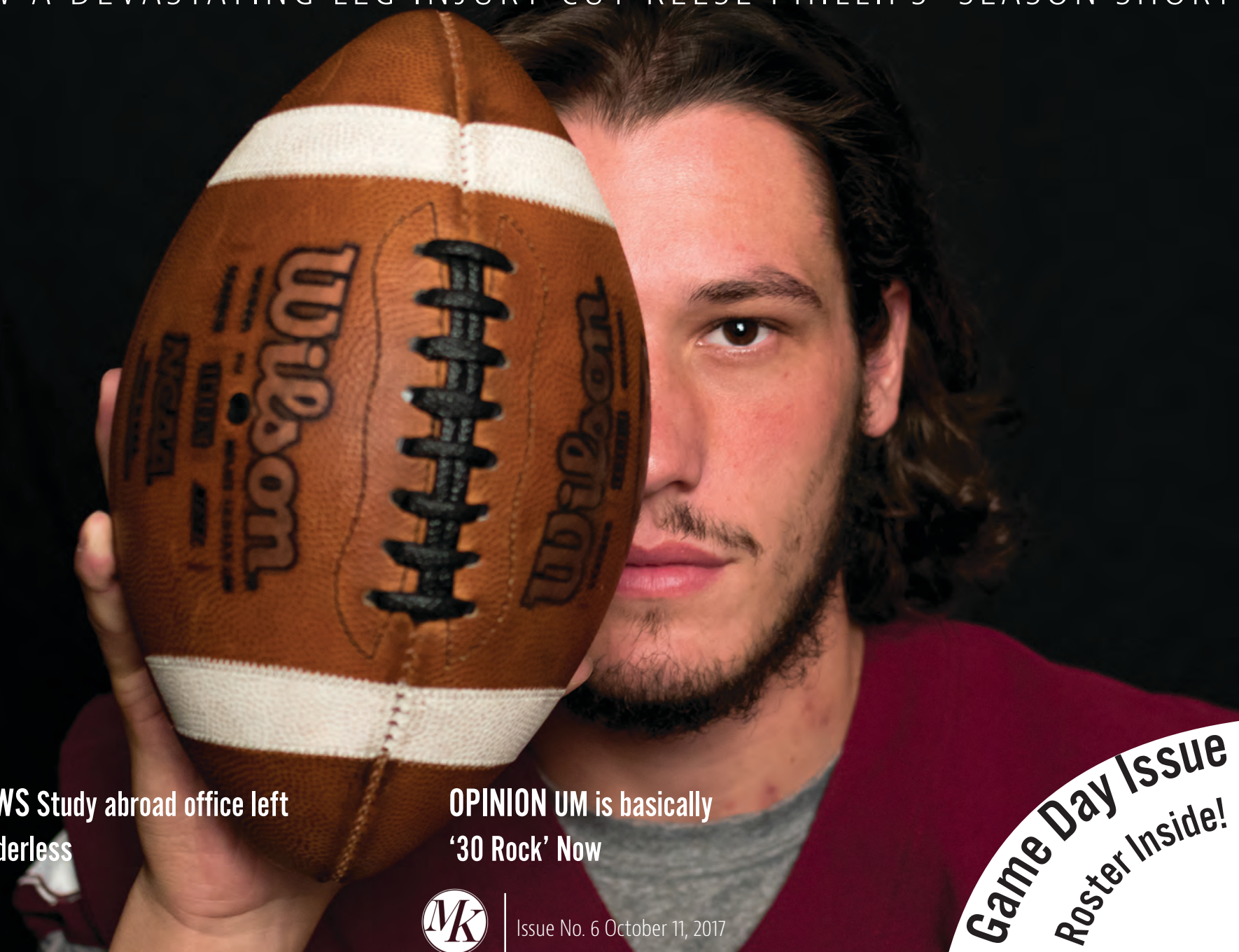
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MONTANA KAIMIN

Sideline

HOW A DEVASTATING LEG INJURY CUT REESE PHILLIPS' SEASON SHORT



NEWS Study abroad office left
rudderless

OPINION UM is basically
'30 Rock' Now



Issue No. 6 October 11, 2017

Game Day Issue
Roster Inside!

ON THE COVER

PHOTO LACEY YOUNG

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21				22			
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54					55					56	57	58
59					60				61			
62					63				64			
65					66				67			

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ACROSS

1 Sweet potato, e.g.
6 Affirm
10 It's a long story
14 Dramatic device
15 Sugar source
16 Make a pitch
17 "People" person, briefly
18 Association
19 Tinker with, in a way
20 Quivering
22 Toy product originally sold in a plastic trash can
23 All lit up
24 Self-conscious laugh
25 Blooper, with "reel"
28 Beanie Babies, e.g.
29 Ready to serve
30 Enthralled
32 X-ray image
37 Above board, slangily
39 Convent dweller
40 Chilling
41 Teenager
44 Forest forager
45 Laurel or locust
46 Moray, e.g.
48 Big deal
49 Current rage
52 Unleash, as havoc
54 Home
55 To a lower position
59 Be a rat
60 "___ Las Vegas"

DOWN

61 Compote ingredient
62 Margin
63 Hand-fist connector
64 Planetary shadow
65 Pore over
66 Draw to a close
67 Ply
1 Boor's lack
2 ___-friendly
3 Ill humor
4 Plant malady
5 Blunt turnaround
6 Agreement
7 Esteem
8 Cross to bear
9 Fly catcher
10 Protected
11 Sit in on
12 Black dirt
13 Fiddle with
21 Storyteller
22 Burn slightly
24 Far-many link
25 Festive celebration
26 Got mellow
27 Certain dancer
29 Pfaltzgraff product
31 Like some books
33 Word on a bill
34 Field
35 ___ Piper
36 Type of sandwich
38 Concise
42 Established
43 High-schooler
47 Like some orders
49 Surgical beam
50 Endure
51 Island group near Fiji
52 Made on a loom
53 Cosmic payback
55 Leading lady
56 Red shade
57 Acute
58 Marquee name
60 "I do", for one

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

A	C	M	E	F	E	T	A	O	F	T	E	N
W	H	E	N	A	N	O	N	N	A	I	V	E
F	I	A	T	S	C	O	T	C	U	T	I	E
U	N	T	R	U	T	H	I	C	E	C	O	L
L	A	Y	E	R	I	N	C	O	M	E		
		A	N	G	L	E		V	O	T	I	V
S	L	A	T	R	A	T	H	E	R		R	E
L	I	L	Y	P	A	D	E	R	E	L	O	N
E	M	U		E	N	A	B	L	E		A	N
D	E	M	A	N	D		A	L	D	E	R	
		T	I	E	D	Y	E		A	G	A	T
T	W	I	T	T	E	R		B	O	R	E	D
A	E	R	I	E		I	C	O	N		S	I
C	A	I	R	N		F	U	R	L		S	O
O	N	S	E	T		T	R	E	Y		E	S

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SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium Edited by Margie E. Burke

	3		9		6			
	4	7			1			
9						3	1	
	1	3	5		2			
		2						
7	6			3	5	4		
							5	
	2			3			9	4
		9	6		5	1		

HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

6	8	4	7	9	1	2	3	5
5	3	2	8	6	4	1	7	9
9	1	7	5	3	2	8	6	4
2	9	1	4	5	7	3	8	6
4	6	5	3	1	8	9	2	7
3	7	8	6	2	9	5	4	1
8	5	3	9	7	6	4	1	2
7	2	9	1	4	3	6	5	8
1	4	6	2	8	5	7	9	3

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MONTANA KAIMIN
THE LAST BEST COLLEGE NEWS

KAIMIN EDITORIAL

College athletes don't just need paychecks, they need a union

College sports keep the University of Montana humming, bolstering local industry every home-game Saturday during football season as fans file into Washington-Grizzly Stadium. 2015 was a record-breaking year for UM Athletics, which saw the department raise roughly \$20.6 million in revenue.

UM athletes do not receive financial assistance beyond academic scholarships. Yet Saturday after Saturday, they are subjected to strenuous physical activity and the very real possibility of injury, all for the love of their game.

Arguments have circulated for years about the plight of NCAA athletes. Plenty would agree that the work players put in justifies at least some compensation. But simply getting them paid shouldn't be the final goal. What players need just as much as a check every two weeks is a union.

Unions have been going to bat for the rights of workers worldwide since the heyday of the Industrial Revolution, blazing the trail for the eight-hour workday and five-day work week. Unions represent employee interests by bargaining with bosses for sick pay, vacation days and much more. In essence,

a good union ensures that workers are treated humanely and equitably.

Since college athletes are not being traditionally paid, the path to unionization has been a significant struggle. Northwestern University, a private college outside of Chicago, fought a protracted battle against its football team when players attempted to unionize as university employees in 2013. The National Labor Relations Board initially denied the team's right to unionize in 2015, but seemingly reversed that decision after releasing a memo in 2017 stating that Division I private university players have every right to unionize and demand pay.

While this may only apply to the dozen-plus private universities that compete as part of the NCAA, this move by the NLRB signals skepticism with the former organization's argument of amateurism — that college athletes are not considered professional players. Whether or not the same logic could apply to public university athletes is unclear. But as these restrictions begin to crumble, athletes should use that momentum to demand better working conditions for themselves.

Organizations that fight for the rights of college athletes exist. The National College Players Association is a nonprofit advocacy group with union-esque goals that include increasing scholarship money, mandatory health and safety standards and prohibiting universities from terminating scholarships due to injuries. The general principles of unionization are still in effect.

According to Steven Greenhouse, who covers labor issues for the New York Times, the NLRB will ultimately not be the arbiters of whether or not public university athletes can unionize. That job goes to individual state legislatures, and plenty of anti-union sentiment exists in capitol buildings across the country. But players shouldn't abandon hope. If there's one thing we've learned from the victories scored for workers by unions, it's that no demand should be considered too lofty.

LIKE IT? HATE IT? WISH WE WERE DEAD?

Email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

KAIMIN COMIC



RENE SANCHEZ

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Queeries: Your gay friend isn't that desperate

My friend just told me that he's gay. Should I be worried that he has a crush on me?

I don't know. Did he ask you out afterward? Is he specifically into homophobes with egos the size of Montana? Did he come out as you-sexual?

Jokes aside, this is actually a common fear. It's not an especially rational one, but it's everywhere. What's important to remember is that gay and bisexual people are like straight people. They're not attracted to every single person they meet. Straight women are attracted to men, but obviously they're not all into you in particular. You seem to have a lot of spare time to think about these things. Perhaps that time could be better spent on self-reflection.

To be fair, you're not totally at fault here because this fear comes from a very real place. Gay culture is over-sexualized in our society. TV shows, movies and other types of media including gay characters typically focus on the sex those characters are having more than they dwell on those characters as people with complete personalities.

As a result, when we think of gay people, those messages come up again and again. It's a habit that's hard to break, but ultimately it's about recognizing that gay people aren't just gay. They have personalities! They can be attracted to people who aren't you!

The trope that gay people lie in wait of unsuspecting straight folks to "convert" is harmful and inaccurate. It reaffirms the idea that being gay automatically makes a person predatory, which in turn breeds homophobia. You haven't been bamboozled, your friend just felt comfortable enough to share something important with you.

Suppose for a second, though, that your gay friend does have a crush on you. So what? If you're not gay (and even if you are), you don't have to date that person. You don't have to date anyone. This situation isn't different than any other friendship and it shouldn't be treated as such. If you're too insecure in your sexuality to deal with the fact that a gay person might have a crush on you, then you need to handle that on your own time. Think about what exactly scares you about this situation, and I'm sure it'll be some variation of, "I don't want people to think I'm

gay, too." Why is that a problem for you? It's almost like our society treats gay people poorly or something.

What really gets to me about these kinds of situations is that coming out to your friends is a risk. It's very often terrifying, and the thought that someone could react with disgust or fear is enough to keep a gay person closeted. Instead of finding a way to make someone's coming out about you and your discomfort, try to be compassionate. Recognize that it takes bravery to come out and trust that if your friend does in fact have feelings for you, they'll find a way to tell you. Speculation isn't productive. It doesn't help you, it certainly doesn't help your friend and it makes you seem like an asshole.

CAL REYNOLDS

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With new president, UM's transformation into Tina Fey sitcom is complete

Well, well, well. It seems that our overlords here at the university have finally chosen our new fearless leader, and he appears ready to take our aimless floating vessel of knowledge back into the harbor of enrollment spikes and budget increases. A former General Electric executive in our Oval Office may seem like a departure from the typical presidential candidate, and many have voiced concerns over Seth Bodnar's lack of doctorates and educational experience.

But worry not! Putting a GE head honcho in charge of a sometimes rudderless group of reprobates has been done before. Bodnar simply needs to follow the very handsome lead set by Alec Baldwin.

Confused? Don't be. I'm talking, of course, about Baldwin's portrayal of Vice President of East Coast Television and Microwave Oven Programming for General Electric, Jack Donaghy. Viewers watched the slick-talking and self-assured character for seven years on Lorne Michaels and Tina Fey's incredibly influential and multi-Emmy Award winning production, "30 Rock." Like Donaghy, our new president has experience with big business. Also like Donaghy, he clearly knows how to wear a suit well.

I imagine our new president will have multiple Donaghy-

like, GE-learned lessons to teach us about the value of hard work and vertical integration. Maybe he, too, once claimed, "I am God," during a deposition. He can also teach us to rise above the pettiness of those whose opinions do not matter (subordinates, women, the poor). To quote Jack, "Human empathy; it's as useless as the Winter Olympics." It's time to start preparing for our acid-tongued future, and sometimes that means making some hard decisions.

One thing I know for sure is that we'll all need to become a lot more comfortable with business lingo. I'm talking about "synergy," "integrating," "touching base" and that old chestnut, "reinventing the wheel." This language may be intentionally obtuse, vague and occasionally nonsensical, but any self-respecting GE executive knows that this business-speak is the path to fiscal success when applied to both traditional corporations and a struggling university.

Let's make this university viable again using President Bodnar's valuable business techniques to kick-start our return to the crème de la crème of Montana universities. As my father has always said, our university is in fact the Cornell of southwestern Montana.

Our new president has a lot to prove in his first few years

in office. Hopefully he will study the ways of his GE forefather, Donaghy, in order to make our university as successful as the latter's hugely profitable Microwave Oven Programming division.

My suggestion for the early days of his presidency? Go with the "30 Rock" game plan that is "Reaganing." In other words, focus on the flawless problem-solving accomplished so far only by Ronald Reagan, Jack Donaghy, American automobile executive Lee Iacocca and former GE chairman Jack Welch.

So Godspeed, Seth Bodnar. May your microwave oven light bulb illuminate our way into a brighter and more successful future. If the road ahead looks bleak, turn to Donaghy once again for this ageless advice:

"What do we elites do when we screw up? We pretend it never happened and give ourselves a giant bonus."

Actually, that last piece of wisdom is probably better left as a footnote in the university's history.

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CAMPUS BUDGET

Hiring freeze leaves study abroad office understaffed

ROSIE COSTAIN

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Study abroad students looking for counsel will find themselves facing the recorded voice of Bodhi Murphy on his old answering machine.

"You've reached the desk of the Education Abroad coordinator. There is currently no one in this position, as we are in the process of rehiring," Murphy says in his message, before directing students to call the director of Education Abroad.

On September 18, Murphy left his position as the Education Abroad coordinator, where he helped outgoing study abroad students, and became the international sponsored student program specialist in the Global Engagement office. Now, he helps international students connect with resources on campus.

This switch left the director of Education Abroad, Marja Unkuri-Chaudhry, alone in the study abroad office, as Murphy was one of two full-time employees.

In the last few weeks, the study abroad program selected which students will travel to foreign universities this spring. Students are now looking for help applying for visas, buying insurance, and getting answers to questions about the upcoming process.

"We're certainly doing our best to assist these students," Unkuri-Chaudhry said. "It's a lot for us to handle right now."

Murphy said he is "basically doing two jobs," as he is still holding advising sessions for students in the study abroad program, despite moving positions.

Murphy's old position is still vacant due to a hiring and recruitment freeze instituted by provost Beverly Edmond on May 12 of this year. In order to hire someone, departments must make a request for approval and justify the need to fill the position.

Claudine Cellier, the director of academic personnel and communication at the provost's office, said a request to fill the study abroad coordinator position is currently being processed. The hiring process cannot start until the request is approved.

Murphy said he applied for the international sponsored student program specialist position, which has been vacant since June, on August 1. He started the position only a few weeks after finding out he got it, leaving little time for the request to refill his old position to be filed and processed.

As the request is processed, students need to under-



PHOTO DAN FRANZ / ILLUSTRATION KELSEY JOHNSON

stand that those with the closest application deadlines take priority, Unkuri-Chaudhry said.

Junior Emma Thorp was selected to study abroad in England this spring. She said that despite Murphy's absence, this semester is going smoother than last spring when she was working on her application.

With a lot of questions, she couldn't always get a quick

response from the study abroad office, but whenever she did, the counsel she received from Murphy and Unkuri-Chaudhry was very effective.

Since her acceptance to the program, she hears from Unkuri-Chaudhry regularly through scheduled meetings, emails and the preparatory study abroad class students must take.

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ASUM accepts UM Foundation proposal for input

KEITH SZUDARSKI

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana accepted a proposal from the UM Foundation allowing students more of a voice in the fundraising organization at its weekly meeting last Wednesday.

Brenna Love, ASUM vice president, presented the Senate with the Foundation's proposed terms for student representation, the latest product of a conversation that started three years ago.

Last year's Senate, under the leadership of Sam Forstag, passed a resolution requesting meaningful student participation in the Foundation with an attached timeline for legal action if the Foundation declined student involvement.

"Among other reasons, private donations now account for significantly more funding to UM than state support," former President Sam Forstag said. "There is currently little-to-no formalized student involvement in the decision-making around those dollars."

The Foundation's proposed policy centers around creating a formal structure for communication between both ASUM and the Foundation. It seems to merely codify a pre-existing arrangement, Forstag said.

ASUM wants to be involved with any decisions made by the Foundation that affect students, President Braden Fitzgerald said, and to establish a way for students to express their concerns to the Foundation's committees and staff.

The policy was proposed by the Foundation with input from ASUM's executive team.

The Foundation invited the ASUM president to serve as a student liaison between the Senate and the Foundation. It states that the President "shall be consulted" by the Foundation when student feedback is desired.

There was significant debate among the Senate regarding the proposal's language. Some senators felt it was vague and didn't explicitly express their interests. Sen. Mariah Welch was the first to raise concern on Wednesday.

"We deserve transparency and for our voice to be present," she said. Welch said ASUM would look bad if it settled for anything less than the student involvement they asked for from the Foundation.

Other senators were on the fence or in favor of the proposal as it was presented to ASUM. Sen. Garret Morrill said that there is nothing more damaging than a body attacking itself, referring to talk about ASUM suing the Foundation if its terms weren't meant.

ASUM Business Manager Ben Kuiper said that the proposal as it stands is not an end, but a start. If ASUM doesn't send the proposal forward it'll have nothing, Kuiper said.

Despite the heated debate, ASUM passed the Foundation's policy to allow the ASUM President to represent UM's student body, 17-4.

The Adams Center is in fiscal crisis, Fitzgerald said, and hasn't been making the money it hoped to after investing in renovations. As a result, UM Productions is being denied access to the Adams Center in an effort to keep ticket sales in house, rather than losing a portion to UM

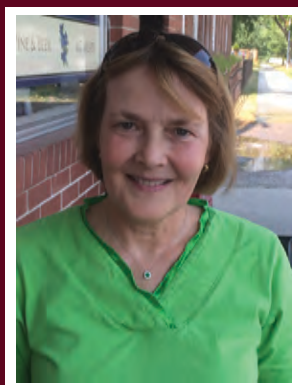
Productions.

Fitzgerald said that either the role of UM Productions or its relationship with the Adams Center needs to change. The agreement between the two worked well in managing events, at least until the Adams Center's renovations, Fitzgerald said.

Fitzgerald said he will explore options with interim Vice President of Administration and Finance Rosi Keller this week to discuss a possible fix for both parties. On Monday, Keller seemed unaware of the problem, but confirmed she was meeting with Fitzgerald.

2017 T. ANTHONY POLLNER LECTURE: 'CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES: CAN JOURNALISM LIVE WITHOUT THEM?'

PRESENTED BY
CHERYL CARPENTER



Cheryl Carpenter is a former Washington, D.C., bureau chief for McClatchy Newspapers and the fall 2017 T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor. She helped edit the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Panama Papers," a global investigation into fraud and tax evasion by offshore investors. She is a former managing editor of the Charlotte Observer in Charlotte, N.C.

OCTOBER 16, 2017 / 7 P.M.
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Journalism
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Halloween's about to get lit, for better or worse

JESSICA SHELDAHL

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At first, people thought the lineup for Sound Live's Halloween Lit Party was too good to be true. What could hip hop artists XXXTentacion, Tyga, Lil Pump and Famous Dex possibly be doing at the Adams Center on Oct. 27?

An official email blast from the Adams Center finally put the rumors to rest. The all-ages show advertised as "the BIGGEST Halloween party to EVER hit Missoula" was a go.

"It's going to be a big party," Sound Live's party promoter La-Fonte Joe said. "It just happens to be a very expensive party."

Halloween Lit Party certainly has the potential for success, having already sold roughly 1,500 tickets. Big names in hip-hop are infrequent visitors to western Montana and large-scale events for young people are difficult to come by in a relatively small college town, especially for those underage.

The party also offers something different from the traditional downtown bar crawls and Disco Bloodbath, the electronic music festival that has taken place in venues scattered across Missoula during the Halloween weekend for the past seven years.

Logan Foret of BassFace Krew Productions said they're not worried about Halloween Lit Party's effect on the annual event. "Early bird" ticket sales are already sold out.

"We welcome any events into Missoula that might help



GRAPHIC RENE SANCHEZ

strengthen our music scene," Foret said. "That being said, Disco Bloodbath has had a number of competing events over the years such as Heaven and Hell, Purgatory and a gothic ball. [Disco Bloodbath] has remained true to its original goal of an all locally-based lineup, inexpensive tickets and a massive amount of community involvement. Montana has been amazingly supportive over the years."

Missoula clearly has room for a diversified music scene. There's just one big problem. With a history of violence, false imprisonment and assault, headliner XXXTentacion, whose real name is Jahseh Onfroy, is one of hip-hop's most controversial rising stars. He is even scheduled to stand trial for aggravated battery of a pregnant woman on Dec. 11 of this year.

Despite controversy, the young Miami-based rapper with roots in "SoundCloud rap" has gained popularity over the last year. He released his debut album "17" this summer, which reached the number two spot on the US Billboard 200 chart.

XXXTentacion has an incredibly loyal fanbase, as seen in comments on the event's Facebook page. Many partygoers are buying tickets just to see XXXTentacion perform. And the fact that it's an event open to anyone, even minors, has drawn in even larger crowds.

In light of his troubling past, some people on campus feel that the Adams Center should not have booked the 19-year-old musician. Students Maggie Bornstein, Madeline Simko and Sky Gennette began organizing a protest a few days after tickets went on sale. The protest will occur on the same day as Halloween Lit Party.

"We feel that XXXTentacion's long history of violence, especially that against women, does not align with our personal values, those values of the university and the values of Missoula," Bornstein said.

The students are holding meetings on Tuesdays in the UC commons throughout the month to plan the protest and discuss the issue of domestic violence with other community members. They are also trying to create media content that brings awareness to the connection between domestic violence and mass shootings.

"We are hoping that anyone who respects women finds themselves there," Bornstein said.

ALBUM REVIEW

Cults returns with a streamlined synth twist on their '60s "Wall of Sound" vibe

DREW NOVAK

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Cults stepped into the music blogosphere in 2011 fully formed, with a shtick that touched on girl groups of the 1960s and Phil Spector's trademark "Wall of Sound" production style. Madeline Follin's sweetly layered voice lured listeners in with its easygoing familiarity. But the self-titled debut album paired that sugary naivety with a darker undercurrent. It featured vocal samples of legitimate cult leaders speaking to brainwashed followers brushed up against reverb guitar and subtle synth work, giving their alternative pop a hint of edge. Like fellow buzzworthy noise-pop duo Sleigh Bells album "Treats," released the previous year, our introduction to Cults was familiar enough to be accessible but with an interesting

spin.

To call the 2013 follow-up, "Static," a disappointment is merely stating the truth. Everything that made Cults' debut refreshing had been forgotten in a recognizable "sophomore slump." The strong pop songwriting skills had been dulled to a mediocre wash of muddled sounds and lackluster hooks. It would have been easy to write them off altogether; a one-album wonder destined for obscurity in the ever-splintering interests of the music-loving public at large.

But guitarist Brian Oblivion and Follin took their time with album number three, "Offering," released in early October. And the extra time away is apparent in the results. Let it be known: This is a good album. "Offering" incorporates a more 1980s vibe straight off the bat with the eponymous track. There is a new shoegaze element to the music this time, gauzy but clean. Dreamy synths swirl around Follin's sardonically hope-

ful lyrics like, "Hanging at the end of a rope, but I can make you an offering." Cults is once again finding the intersection between bleakness and twee with winning results.

The bass riff alone in "I Took Your Picture" is worth writing home about, sounding not unlike Spoon with an extra poppy shimmer laid over the top. "Good Religion" leads us in with a quiet, jaunty piano line and continues with a chorus that recalls the cult gimmick from the first album. "I heard you found a good religion," Follin sings, "that final piece that you've been missing."

The album closes with the airy "Gilded Lily," where Follin asks an unnamed lover, "Haven't I given enough?" By the time the record finishes, listeners are sure to answer, "No." After the fumbled second album, "Offering" puts the band back on track.

Keep it coming, Cults. We aren't finished with you yet.

SIDELINED



PHOTO TATE SAMATA

HOW A DEVASTATING LEG INJURY CUT REESE PHILLIPS' SEASON SHORT

BY JACKSON WAGNER



LEFT: Phillips covers his face as a medical team moves him off the field.

ABOVE: A fan reacts to Phillip's injury during the second quarter of the game against Savannah State University on Sept. 16. PHOTOS SARA DIGGINS

OPPOSITE: Griz quarterback Reese Phillips gestures for the crowd to get louder as he's carted off the field after a season-ending injury. PHOTO TATE SAMATA

It was perfect football weather in Montana — low 50s, and clear, blue skies on a mid-September day. Montana played host to a winless Savannah State team, the final tune-up game for the Griz before entering conference play. They were led by senior quarterback Reese Phillips.

Phillips had waited five years for this. He waited five years to be out on the football field in front of thousands of fans. Five years to be suited up, putting his helmet on instead of setting it down. Five years to hear his name announced as the starting quarterback.

It had taken time to get the rust off, but once he did, Phillips was playing like he always knew he could. The high school star from Chattanooga, Tennessee torched the Savannah State defense, completing his first 13 passes of the game.

On the fourth play of the second quarter, he was flushed from the pocket to his own left. He made it to the numbers before flipping the ball away underhanded. Perfection was gone, but Montana was ahead 14 points and in Savannah State territory again.

The next play, Phillips reached the ball toward Jeremy Calhoun, all the while keeping his eyes on the SSU safety. When he came downfield, Phillips pulled the ball up to throw. When the cornerback jumped inside of Keenan Curran, the quarterback was forced to tuck the ball and try to scramble back to the line of scrimmage.

Stefen Banks wrapped up Phillips in the middle of the line. When the pile cleared, Phillips lay face down, pounding the turf and writhing in pain. His right leg shook uncontrollably. His left ankle pointed up, nearly 180 degrees in the wrong

direction.

As quickly as Phillips had found football, he lost it again.

Phillips grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the youngest of seven children. He came from a football family. His dad played quarterback, a high school star that didn't get the chance to play at the next level because of his size. His grandpa won a high school state championship before playing at Georgia.

Phillips began playing high school football when he was in eighth grade and left Signal Mountain High School with five letters. As a sophomore, Phillips and Signal Mountain won a 2-A State Championship, in just the second year of varsity football for the school.

He took over as the starting QB his junior year. Another dominant season was cut short after the state caught an ineligible player on the team. After that season, he received an offer from Kentucky. The Wildcats offensive coordinator, Randy Sanders, was a former Tennessee Volunteer quarterback. Phillips, a diehard Vols fan, committed right away.

His senior year Signal Mountain lost out in the first round of the playoffs. After football season, Phillips graduated early and went to Kentucky for spring ball. Before he arrived, Kentucky fired nearly its entire football staff, including Sanders.

The coaching change made it tough, but Phillips stayed at Kentucky and redshirted his freshman year. The next year, he entered a QB battle with Patrick Towles. Kentucky had Drew Barker, a five-star recruit, coming in the next season. Phillips

knew it was now or never.

Neal Brown, the offensive coordinator, picked Phillips for the starting job. Head coach Mark Stoops picked Towles. After a 5-7 season, Brown announced he was leaving to become the head coach at Troy.

Phillips thought about leaving, transferring down and starting clean. But Brown told him about the new coordinator Shannon Dawson. The quarterback agreed to stay through the spring, but wouldn't commit further.

"Then I fell in love with the new [offensive coordinator] Shannon Dawson," Phillips said. "I talk about him all the time because that is my dude. I really felt like he was going to give me a fair chance."

Then two days before spring practice started, Phillips ruptured his Achilles tendon, ending his season. He regretted not leaving, but grew a friendship with Dawson that made the year in Kentucky worthwhile.

Phillips got his first taste of Montana football at the start of that year, watching them defeat No. 1 North Dakota State 38-35 on ESPN.

"Damn, this is dope. This is an FCS team?" Phillips thought, watching the crowd at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

While injured, he helped Dawson analyze film and come up with plays. When Dawson was fired at the end of the year, it was the last straw for Phillips. He threw just nine passes at Kentucky.

He called coach Stoops on Christmas Eve to tell him he would transfer. He went to Dawson, his most trusted coach, for advice.



Phillips runs with the ball during UM's 45-23 victory over Valparaiso on Sept. 2. PHOTO LACEY YOUNG

"I know Bob Stitt and Montana, they are looking for a quarterback of the future," Dawson told him.

"I trust you, whatever you think I should do, I'll do it," Phillips answered.

"Do you care to go across the country?" Dawson asked.

In his first year, Phillips was third-string behind Brady Gustafson and Chad Chalich and still recovering from the Achilles injury at Kentucky.

"I was raw when I first got here, it was not like how I was playing (this year)," Phillips said. "It took me a long time to come back from the Achilles, just learning how to step up in the pocket. I didn't do that when I first got here. I forgot how hard that was."

He expected to be the starter his senior year, but redshirt-freshman Gresch Jensen had a good spring camp, creating a quarterback battle with Phillips. The senior won the job in the fall a few weeks before the first game.

In the season opener against Valparaiso, he looked like a quarterback who hadn't taken competitive snaps in five years. The heavy favorites going in, Montana led by just four points at halftime.

In the second half, something clicked. Phillips threw four touchdowns and the Griz won 45-23.

The next week they challenged No. 7 Washington. Montana was outclassed in that game, losing 63-7, but Phillips again felt like he played well. Coming home for the game against Savannah State he was playing the best football of his life. The opening of that game came easy to Phillips.

He remembers one play in particular. The defense forced him up in the pocket. While he was falling, he flipped a show-

el pass to running back Alijah Lee.

"It got called back but at that point I got up and was like, 'Damn, I've never done that before,'" Phillips said. "I wasn't really trying but I was like, 'I'm about to ball,' because that was a really veteran type of play and I hadn't been doing that."

After a 13-for-13 start in a game the Griz were going to win easily, Phillips felt his college career come to an end.

"I felt that it was about to happen basically," Phillips said. "I was falling forward and just knew it was coming because I could not move my foot. It was just stuck and I was falling forward like, 'Shit.' Right when I went down it all popped and I felt it all."

The experience of a previous major leg injury told him it was over right away. The trainers tended to him, first getting his dislocated ankle popped back into place. He cried profusely as they worked to get him more stable and onto the cart.

Then the entire Montana team cleared the sideline to surround and support their quarterback. When a referee threatened Montana with a flag, receiver Keenan Curran said that they could throw the flag if they wanted but the team was going out to support its brother.

Phillips did his best to hide the tears. He put a towel over his head and sat up in the cart, waving at the crowd and giving a thumbs up. It was difficult maintaining his composure, but Phillips thought it was something he needed to do.

"I don't know, I just felt like, knowing that was probably the last time I was going to be on a football field like that and being the quarterback, knowing that they still had to play a game, that's what they needed to see," Phillips said. "They knew I was hurt, they knew it was really bad."

His mother, Elaine Reese, watched from the crowd. She had quit her job in Chattanooga to move to Montana for his senior season. She couldn't see his leg and was waiting for him to get back up.

"When the cart came out I knew that it was serious," Reese said. "I didn't even stick around, I went up and found somebody and said, 'Get me to my son.'"

Phillips took an ambulance to the hospital, where he tried to watch a little bit of the Griz game as he waited for x-rays. It was too difficult to watch, so he switched to the Tennessee game, which he joked was even harder to watch.

The Griz went on to win the game 56-3. Redshirt-freshman Gresch Jensen scored four total touchdowns. Despite the big win, the mood was somber in the postgame press conference.

"I'm proud of our players but it's hard to think about that when you have one of your guys go down like Reese did," Stitt said. "Just knowing his story and how long he's waited to get to that point and how well he was playing, it breaks my heart and I know it does for everyone else in our football program."

The verdict of the x-rays came in. Phillips broke his fibula, the smaller of the two bones in the lower leg, in three different places. He ruptured all of the ligaments in his ankle. He also dislocated his ankle, but they put that back into place on the field.

Surgery lasted three hours, with doctors putting a plate and screws into his lower leg to hold it all in place. He stayed at the hospital that night.

Two days later, he issued an official statement through Griz athletics:

"So you can hear it from me, I shattered my fibula, ruptured just about all the ligaments in my foot and dislocated my left foot all in one play," Phillips said in the statement. "Pretty impressive right?"

He had received a lot of attention from the moment the injury happened. Everyone watching the game knew how serious it was. If you didn't see it live, photos of it could be found online.

The Missoulian posted a photo showing the injury on its website and Instagram. Reese saw the photo and started crying. Phillips checked with the Missoulian Griz beat reporter Amie Just, who argued that the photo shouldn't go up and refused to Tweet any photos showing it. Eventually he got on the phone with editor-in-chief Kathy Best.

"I actually called them and I talked to Kathy (Best) and I was pissed, I was really mad," Phillips said. "I understand as a journalism student if it bleeds it leads, I get that that was the storyline, but I felt disrespected."

Best said she talked to Phillips about removing the photo. It was taken down from Instagram but left on the site. She said it was left up because it was in the context of other stories and columns, and depicted the game's key moment.

After the game, support came from all over the country. Former Griz players Chase Reynolds and Tyrone Holmes reached out. Former Kentucky Wildcat and New York Giant quarterback Jared Lorenzen tweeted him. Phillips then released a statement through Griz athletics and things got crazy.



Phillips shows off his boot to the "Voice of the Griz" Riley Corcoran during practice Oct. 4. He will act as the team's Undergraduate Student Coach for the remainder of the season. PHOTO HOPE FREIER

"A lot of people don't know what's going to happen when you lose your quarterback so I tried to even be a little funny, and after that is when I started going around town and people knew me," Phillips said. "Random people came up and were like your statement was awesome, that is what people needed to see."

On the Tuesday following his injury he returned to Washington-Grizzly Stadium to support his teammates at practice.

Phillips' leadership ability set him apart from Jensen. Even if his leg was broken, his voice wasn't. He said that Jensen is one of the best young quarterbacks he has ever been around, but he doesn't have that vocal leadership yet. Phillips knows he can help him grow in that department, but being at practice wasn't easy.

"I try to stay positive all the time, but it's definitely hard," he said. "The first couple of practices I definitely had to duck off by myself and kind of hide my face because I was getting emotional. That was really hard, but I knew that's what the guys need."

Montana played at home again the next week, a huge match-up with Big Sky favorite Eastern Washington. Phillips, in a wheelchair, watched the team warm up on the field. When the first group of offensive players came out of the tunnel, he huddled them up and gave a pre-game speech, a tradition that a broken leg wasn't going to stop.

He went into a box before the game and watched the rest from there. Just before the team came out onto the field, his mom started crying.

"I have to tell you something," she said.

"What do you have to tell me?" he asked.

Then the team burst from the tunnel, fireworks shooting off on either side as the smoke machine hid the players for the first couple of feet. When the players came into sight, so too did a large white flag with a maroon 11, Reese's number.

The idea came from Phillips' brother, Brock Sparks, who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"I wanted to do something to kind of lift Reese's spirits up so I was like; what can I do other than go out there and be with him, what can I do since he's not going to be on the field physically?" Sparks said. "It just popped into my head, make a flag with his number on it. So that's exactly what I did."

Sparks and his girlfriend created the flag, getting the materials together and then sewing on the maroon number 11. He brought the flag with him when he came to visit, keeping it a secret from his little brother.

He texted Curran during the middle of the week to see if anyone could carry the flag out of the tunnel. The receiver took it on himself to carry the flag, and also helped keep it hidden from Phillips before the game. He has now carried the flag out at three games and will continue to all season.

"Him coming out of the tunnel with the team is something he can't do, he can't even put pressure on his leg, so that is basically him coming out in spirit with us," Curran said. "He's one of my best friends and it's an honor for me to bring it out."

Phillips watched the Eastern game but was unable to travel to Portland. His leg, still in a splint, was in too much pain for the journey. He watched the game from home.

"It's a lonely feeling. All your best friends are going to play and you're just here and can't walk. It's like, 'Shit, I can't even go to the bathroom without breaking a sweat,' so that's

tough," Phillips said.

But he doesn't plan on missing another game this season. The splint was removed and he was put into a boot the Monday after the Portland State game. He was with the team in Pocatello last Saturday.

Quarterback coach Andrew Selle has been the biggest supporter of Phillips, talking with him every day. In 2010 Selle suffered a career-ending injury during his senior year at Montana. He still remembers the pain he went through, but hopes his lessons can help Phillips.

"At this point there's not a whole lot that I can tell him to make him feel better other than just talking about what I went through and what I learned from it," Selle said. "You try to help any way you can but it's a process he's going to have to work through on his own and find a way to move on with his life."

Moving forward, Phillips is unsure if he wants to pursue a medical redshirt, which would allow him to play another year. He hasn't been given an exact timetable for recovery, but hopes to be able to put pressure on his toes at two months. After that, he is hoping that in seven or eight months he will be cleared. But even then, he knows he won't be the same player he was.

If he returned to Montana, he would likely be the backup to Jensen. He could always try to go somewhere else, but said that he loves Missoula and wants to finish here. There is only one thing that could get him to return.

"I would like to walk off the field on my own, that is the only reason I would come back, I just don't really know if it's worth it or not," he said.

As a journalism major, he could stick with the sport of football and pursue a reporting career. He also has weighed coaching as an option of what to do after school.

If he does want to pursue a coaching job, he'll start by talking with Stitt and his former coordinator Dawson. No matter what he does, his mother knows that he will find a way to come out on top. He always has.

"I've watched him from the very beginning and from getting his scholarship to Kentucky to here, all the obstacles he has endured," Reese said. "Most people would have just given up a long time ago. It seemed like no matter what happened to him he kept his head up and just kept moving forward."

Reese Phillips' playing career is likely over. He threw nine passes as a Kentucky Wildcat. He played nine full quarters at the University of Montana. He suffered a major injury on each of his legs. But even if he didn't lead Montana to the playoffs or break any records, he will go down in Montana history.

The community support, the tweets and texts, they all show what he meant to Missoula. But an entire team leaving the sideline, surrounding their quarterback—that shows what he meant to Montana Grizzly football.

"These are my guys, we are so much more than just teammates," Phillips said. "We are kind of like family and they showed that. That's what Coach Stitt preaches all the time. I think people don't understand when he says it, about the closeness, but now they've seen it. Now they know."

GRIZ

NO.	NAME	YEAR	POS.	HT.	WT.
1	Treshawn Favors	R-Sr.	RB	5-9	209
1	Markell Sanders	R-Jr.	CB	6-2	189
2	Gresch Jensen	R-Fr.	QB	6-2	218
2	Ryan McKinley	R-Sr.	CB	6-1	193
3	Justin Calhoun	R-So.	WR	5-10	174
3	Mick Delaney	R-Sr.	S	6-0	196
4	Rey Green	R-Fr.	RB	5-11	195
5	Kobey Eaton	R-So.	WR	6-3	180
5	Justin Strong	Sr.	S	5-11	190
6	Keenan Curran	Jr.	WR	6-2	203
7	Dareon Nash	R-Fr.	CB	6-2	178
7	Matt Rensvold	Fr.	WR	6-4	211
8	Jeremy Calhoun	Jr.	RB	6-0	213
8	Lewis Cowans	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	192
9	Brennan Corbin	R-Fr.	WR	6-5	210
10	Nate Dick	Fr.	QB	5-10	188
10	Connor Strahm	R-Sr.	LB	6-0	240
11	Isiahia Banks	Fr.	S	6-0	203
12	Korey Alexander	Sr.	S	5-11	190
12	Caleb Hill	Jr.	QB	6-4	215
13	Josh Sandry	R-So.	S	6-1	203
13	Tanner Wilson	Fr.	QB	6-2	195
14	Michael McGinnis	Fr.	S	6-3	191
15	Retired in Honor of Dave Dickenson	Gr.			
16	Jerry Louie-McGee	R-So.	WR	5-9	175
17	Makena Simis	R-Sr.	WR	6-2	235
18	Samuel Akem	R-Fr.	WR	6-4	195
19	Malik Flowers	Fr.	WR	6-2	185
20	Gavin Crow	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	200
20	Terron Moses	Fr.	RB	5-7	166
21	Lamarriel Taylor	R-So.	WR	6-2	198
22	Retired in Honor of Terry Dillon	Gr.			
23	Josh Egbo	R-Fr.	CB	6-2	193
24	Allijah Lee	R-Jr.	RB	5-6	197
25	Shane Moody	R-Sr.	RB	5-8	176
26	Jared Thurber	Fr.	WR	6-4	169
27	Cody McCombs	R-So.	RB	5-9	196
28	Josh Deshner	Fr.	ATH	6-0	190
29	Kendall Sweet	Fr.	LB	5-11	216
30	Evan Epperly	R-Jr.	S	5-10	197
30	Nick Fouch	Fr.	WR	6-0	162
31	Trase Le Texier	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	236
33	Dante Olson	R-So.	LB	6-3	230
34	Jace Lewis	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	220
35	Eric Williams	Jr.	KP	6-0	188
36	James Banks	Sr.	LB	6-1	215
37	Tucker Schye	R-Sr.	DE	6-4	242
38	Caleb Mitchell	R-Fr.	LS	6-1	195
39	Brandon Purdy	R-So.	KP	5-10	182

NO.	NAME	YEAR	POS.	HT.	WT.
40	Cy Sirmon	R-So.	DE	6-3	250
41	Curtis Holmes	Fr.	CB	5-9	175
42	Josh Buss	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	220
43	Chris Favoroso	R-So.	DE	6-3	245
44	Randy Rodriguez	R-Fr.	DT	6-3	244
45	Vika Fa'atuiese	R-So.	LB	6-3	230
47	Cole Rosling	R-Fr.	DE	6-4	230
49	Jesse Sims	R-So.	DT	6-4	272
50	Cody Meyer	R-So.	OL	6-3	293
51	Mike Ralston	R-Sr.	OL	6-5	302
52	Michael Matthews	Fr.	LB	6-2	206
53	Carder Key	Fr.	LB	6-2	210
54	Gage Smith	R-Jr.	LB	6-3	217
55	Kyle Davis	R-Jr.	DT	6-1	283
56	Marcus Welnel	Fr.	LB	6-0	212
57	Shayne Cochran	R-Jr.	LB	6-1	220
60	Colton Keintz	Fr.	OL	6-8	275
61	Matthew O'Donoghue	R-Fr.	LS	6-1	248
62	Dylan Eickmeyer	R-Fr.	OG	6-4	292
66	Ashton Torres	R-Fr.	OT	6-4	292
67	Thayne Jackson	R-Fr.	OG	6-5	296
70	Skyler Martin	Fr.	OL	6-5	255
71	Payton Stoner	Fr.	OL	6-6	282
72	Cooper Sprunk	R-Sr.	C	6-4	300
73	Brandon Scott	R-Fr.	OT	6-7	295
74	Angel Villanueva	R-So.	OL	6-5	324
75	Robert Luke	Sr.	OL	6-4	318
76	David Reese	Sr.	OL	6-7	301
77	Dallas Hart	R-So.	OL	6-5	315
78	Conlan Beaver	R-Fr.	OT	6-5	293
80	Josh Horner	Sr.	WR	6-5	232
81	Mitch McLaughlin	Jr.	WR	5-9	174
82	Samori Toure	R-Fr.	WR	6-3	186
83	Mitch Roberts	Fr.	WR	6-1	188
84	Jed Nagler	R-Fr.	WR	6-4	218
85	Danny Burton	Fr.	WR	5-10	172
87	Bryson Deming	Fr.	WR	6-4	228
88	Colin Bingham	R-So.	WR	6-3	230
89	Tim Semenza	R-So.	K	5-7	155
90	McKenzie Holt	Fr.	ATH	6-4	238
91	Brandt Davidson	Sr.	DT	6-3	293
92	Myles McKee-Osibodu	Sr.	DT	6-3	272
93	Braydon Deming	Fr.	DE	6-4	234
94	Devin Maua	R-Fr.	DE	6-3	232
95	Andrew Harris	R-So.	LB	6-2	231
96	David Shaw	Jr.	DT	6-5	319
97	RJ Nelson	Fr.	DE	6-4	221
98	Esai Longoria	R-Fr.	DT	6-3	305
99	Reggie Tilleman	R-Jr.	DT	6-4	272

BISON

NO.	NAME	YEAR	POS.	HT.	WT.
1	Chris Board	Sr.	LB	6-1	230
2	Dom Davis	So.	CB	5-11	182
2	Cordell Pimienta	So.	WR	6-0	177
3	Tre Dempsey	Sr.	FS	5-10	184
3	Mason Hofstedt	Fr.	LB	6-0	193
4	Dimitri Williams	Jr.	WR	5-11	191
5	Robbie Grimsley	Jr.	SS	6-0	191
5	Andy Voyen	Fr.	WR	6-2	196
6	James Hendricks	So.	SS	6-1	205
7	Cole Davis	Sr.	QB	6-3	215
7	Peter Isais	Fr.	WR	5-11	170
8	Bruce Anderson	Jr.	RB	5-11	216
9	Marquise Bridges	So.	CB	5-11	182
10	Lance Dunn	Jr.	RB	5-9	211
11	Darren Kelley	Sr.	FS	6-1	197
12	Easton Stick	Jr.	QB	6-2	221
13	Desmond Cain	Jr.	WR	5-10	185
14	Henry Van Dellen	RFr.	QB	6-4	226
15	Holden Hotchkiss	Fr.	QB	6-3	191
15	Daniel Polansky	Sr.	WR	6-0	190
16	Noah Sanders	Fr.	QB	6-2	210
16	RJ Urzendowski	Sr.	WR	6-0	200
17	Felix Dixon	RFr.	CB	5-11	166
17	Carson Yaggie	Fr.	WR	6-2	196
18	Adam Cofield	RFr.	RB	5-11	205
19	Brant Bohmert	Fr.	WR	5-11	179
19	Jackson Koonce	Sr.	P	6-1	197
20	Darius Shepherd	Jr.	WR	5-11	186
21	Jalen Allison	Jr.	CB	6-0	184
22	Garret Wegner	RFr.	P	6-0	184
23	Jaylaan Wimbush	Jr.	CB	6-0	192
24	Demaris Purifoy	So.	RB	6-1	197
25	Jake Reinholz	Fr.	K	6-3	198
25	Michael Tutsie	Fr.	SS	5-10	188
26	Keenan Hodenfield	Sr.	FS	5-11	182
27	Ross Godfrey	RFr.	CB	5-9	166
28	Ty Brooks	So.	RB	5-9	180
29	Eric Bachmeier	Jr.	SS	6-2	202
30	Bryce Bennot	Jr.	CB	5-8	174
30	Seth Wilson	Fr.	RB	5-10	189
31	Victor Kizewsk	RFr.	WR	6-0	192
32	Zak KuntzHear	RFr.	FB	6-2	249
33	Austin Avery	Fr.	TE	6-3	241
33	Christian Watson	Fr.	WR	6-3	186
34	Brock Robbins	So.	FB	6-1	246
35	Josh Hayes	Fr.	CB	5-11	178
35	Dawson Weber	Fr.	FS	6-2	193
36	Cam Pedersen	Jr.	K	6-2	199
37	Tre Fort	So.	CB	5-8	185
38	Jaxon Brown	So.	FS	6-2	203
39	Garrett Malstrom	So.	FB	6-0	250
40	Costner Ching	Fr.	TE	6-3	249
41	Jack Begley	Fr.	LB	6-3	218
42	Jabril Cox	RFr.	LB	6-3	227
43	Beau Pauly	RFr.	LB	6-2	216
44	Cody Mauch	Fr.	TE	6-4	234

NO.	NAME	YEAR	POS.	HT.	WT.
44	Matt Plank	Sr.	LB	6-0	219
45	Levi Jordheim	Jr.	LB	6-2	220
46	Ross Effertz	So.	CB	5-11	200
46	Noah Gindorff	Fr.	TE	6-6	249
47	Max Bautch	Fr.	LB	6-0	219
48	Dan Marlette	Jr.	LB	6-1	225
49	Nick DeLuca	Sr.	LB	6-3	245
50	Ross Kennelly	RFr.	LB	5-11	212
51	James Fisher	Sr.	LS	6-2	225
52	Jackson Hankey	Fr.	LB	6-1	217
53	Cole Karcz	So.	DT	6-4	262
54	Dillon Radunz	RFr.	OT	6-6	287
55	Aaron Mercadel	So.	LB	5-11	206
56	Justice Kelly	RFr.	DE	6-3	193
56	Tanner Sundt	Fr.	DE	6-4	232
57	Zach Willis	Fr.	C	6-4	305
58	Josh Howieson	RFr.	OT	6-5	293
59	Karson Schoening	RFr.	C	6-5	297
60	Lane Tucker	Fr.	DT	6-4	261
61	Zach Kubas	RFr.	OG	6-4	283
62	Bryce Messner	Sr.	OG	6-3	291
63	Aaron Steidl	Jr.	DT	6-2	288
64	Colin Conner	Jr.	OT	6-5	309
65	Jack Albrecht	So.	OG	6-5	278
66	Nash Jensen	Fr.	OG	6-4	349
67	Cordell Volson	RFr.	OT	6-6	299
68	Zack Johnson	So.	OT	6-6	312
69	Blake Williams	Jr.	DT	6-3	290
70	Spencer WaageH	Fr.	DE	6-4	245
71	Luke Bacon	Jr.	OT	6-5	299
72	Erik Olson	Sr.	OT	6-5	277
73	Zack Ziemer	Sr.	OG	6-4	299
74	Tanner Volson	Jr.	C	6-4	301
75	Austin Kuhnert	Sr.	OG	6-4	304
76	Ben Hecht	RFr.	OG	6-5	277
77	Logan McCormick	Fr.	DE	6-2	232
78	Michael Kelly	RFr.	DT	6-1	302
80	Sean Engel	RFr.	WR	6-5	208
81	Josh Babicz	Fr.	TE	6-6	225
82	Ben Ellefson	So.	TE	6-3	250
83	Dallas Freeman	Jr.	WR	6-1	197
84	Trevor Heit	RFr.	WR	5-9	177
85	Nate Jensen	Jr.	TE	6-6	246
86	Jeff Illies	Sr.	TE	6-3	235
87	Connor Wentz	Sr.	TE	6-3	250
88	Matt Anderson	So.	TE	6-4	247
89	Cole Jacob	RFr.	WR	6-1	193
90	Grant Morgan	Sr.	DT	6-4	283
91	Derrek Tuszka	So.	DE	6-5	245
92	Jack Darnell	So.	DT	6-2	292
93	Jarrold Tuszka	Sr.	DE	6-3	255
94	Stanley Jones	Jr.	DE	6-3	245
95	Caleb Butler	Jr.	DE	6-3	244
96	Greg Menard	Sr.	DE	6-2	241
97	Quinn Alo	RFr.	DT	6-2	296
98	Matt Biegler	RFr.	DT	6-3	272
99	Nate Tanguay	Sr.	DT	6-4	291



The Washington-Grizzly Champions Center dedication and open house is set for Oct. 13, during homecoming weekend. PHOTO SKYLAR RISPENS

The Champions Center is finally here

NICK PUCKETT

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Montana will cut the ribbon on its newest facility October 13, finally closing the book on what has been a year long project.

The Champions Center is a 46,000-square-foot building that stands in stark contrast with the backside of the south end zone of Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The glass-faced building will debut Friday before homecoming. It's the newest addition to Grizzly Athletics' complex master plan to renovate not only Washington-Grizzly Stadium, but all of Montana's athletic facilities.

"Our infrastructure facilities, the support facilities that our athletes spend 90 percent of their time in...all those venues we watch them compete in are not where they spend most of their time," Athletic Director Kent Haslam said. "Over the years we have not invested in those facilities. We have not kept up with the competition."

The Champions Center will include a state-of-the-art home

locker room, a new weight training room and team meeting spaces.

"It's been pretty needed. Our locker room is a little beat up," fifth-year running back Treshawn Favors said. "The newer one has more space, can't really complain about that. We have chargers and stuff in our locker room so we don't have to worry about putting our phones in a completely different room."

The need for something like the Champions Center has been in discussion for years, according to Haslam.

"Our football locker room...would leak, water running in there all the time, it was damp, we had risk for MRSA and infection down there. It was not a place conducive to cleanliness," Haslam said.

Junior running back Alijah Lee said he's excited for the improvements — even just simple luxuries like extra space and electrical outlets near the lockers.

"It's pretty cramped up in there so I'm excited to have actual space and enjoy the new accessories," said Lee.

The construction process began last year and had hiccups along the way. Existing underground utilities and a cramped location made the process difficult, Haslam said.

"It was a tricky place to build. It was a spaghetti bowl of utilities down there," Haslam said.

The opening of the Champions Center put Montana back near the top of the competition in terms of facilities. But that's only the beginning.

The master plan for Montana's athletic facilities was drafted by SportsPLAN Studios, a Kansas City sports architecture firm that laid out all of Montana's potential facility renovations. The projected renovations included the \$625,000 softball stadium upgrade, which was approved in May, improved tennis facilities, an indoor practice building and more. Most of the projects outlined will break ground at an undetermined date.

For now, the Champions Center adds to the juggernaut of Montana athletic facilities that could boost its football recruitment back near the top. Montana's 2017 recruiting class was the 13th-best in the country. Although the ranking is still fairly high, it's down from Montana's recruiting success in the past. That could all change in the coming years.

"Especially in the Big Sky, we'll probably have one of the nicest

FOOTBALL ANALYSIS

The trusted transfer: Lee meshing nicely in Montana's backfield

LUCAS AILPORT

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Montana running back Alijah Lee is taking advantage of his chance to make an impact after spending three seasons at Washington State University. He spent most of his time on special teams or on the sideline, seeing little to no action in WSU's backfield.

Lee, a redshirt junior from Los Angeles, transferred to Montana in the summer, but didn't get to Missoula until late July. He walked-on to Washington State as a freshman, but redshirted that season. The only action he got in the backfield was last season, where he had four carries and rushed for 20 yards and a touchdown.

He has helped carry the workload nicely through six games with Montana, despite his lack of time in WSU's backfield. He has 68 carries for 290 yards and four touchdowns. Lee also has 18 receptions for 95 yards.

"I wanted to go somewhere where I would be productive. I want to be a guy who if he gets the ball can make a play," Lee said.

It took a couple weeks for Lee to get comfortable in the system. Through the first two games of the season he had 14 carries for only 42 yards, averaging three yards per carry.

Lee received more touches in week three against Savannah State. He managed 74 yards on 10 carries and reached the endzone twice. Lee had a 33-yard rushing attempt that game, his longest so far in his collegiate career.

Jeremy Calhoun, a junior, is the starting running back, but until the Portland State game he only had 226 yards. Lee had 195 yards at the time and had more of a presence in the passing game than Calhoun.

"Jeremy is a little taller but not that much heavier than Alijah, they're very similar, very powerful backs that wear down defenses," head coach Bob Stitt said. "They're very well rounded because they are both very physical backs but they're big enough and strong enough to pick up a blitz which is very important in our offense."

Lee is only 5-foot-6 but weighs in at 195. Calhoun is 6 feet tall and 213 pounds. Lee said he isn't afraid to drop a shoulder on an opposing player. But he knows how to take advantage of his size.

"Our line is like 6'4 and when you see me sneaking through them I don't think the linebackers can necessarily see me," Lee said.

Stitt said it feels like Lee has spent his entire career in Montana. He has blended in nicely since joining the program. He was confident Lee would be a great teammate and a person people could trust.



PHOTO: Griz running back Alijah Lee in between warm-up drills during practice at Washington-Grizzle Stadium on Oct. 4.

PHOTO HOPE FREIER

KAIMIN COLUMN

Views from the 406: The Big Sky is the best that it's ever been

There was a time when Montana won the Big Sky Championship 12 seasons in a row. The Griz were dominant, a perennial power in the FCS that consistently made deep runs into the playoffs. They won two national championships during that stretch.

But the Big Sky Conference has evolved since the days of Montana's domination. There are no easy games on the schedule and every week Montana finds itself fighting for one of the three or four playoff spots the Big Sky will receive.

The past two weeks Montana played on the road against Portland State and Idaho State. Traditionally, these two games are wins that you can mark down in sharpie at the start of the season.

Montana has lost to Idaho State just twice in the last 30 games. Since Portland State joined the Big Sky in 1996, Montana holds a 16-3 lead in the head-to-head series.

But this year it was different. Idaho State entered the game at 3-2 with a two-point win against FBS Nevada on its resume.

The Bengals, a traditional cellar-dweller in the Big Sky, had beaten Cal Poly at home the week before and were expected to give Montana a scare.

Portland State is winless on the year, but should have defeated Oregon State in an FCS vs. FBS matchup earlier this season. The record doesn't show the talent the Vikings have.

Montana emerged victorious from both outings, but had to play some of its very best football for narrow wins. Idaho State and Montana were both receiving votes to be ranked entering the game and the win moved Montana into the top 25 for the first time this season.

It doesn't get any easier for the Griz moving forward. North Dakota, the preseason No. 1 team in the Big Sky, come to town for Homecoming this weekend. UND has had bad luck with injuries and is currently in 11th place in the conference, but deserved the preseason accolades and should give Montana a tough game.

After that, the Griz hit the road to take on a Weber State

team that is unbeaten in Big Sky play. They face another undefeated Big Sky opponent the next week when Northern Arizona comes to town.

They close the season with games against Northern Colorado and Montana State just like in 2016, when the Griz lost both and fell out of playoff contention.

The Big Sky Conference is as talented and deep as it has ever been. For Montana to avoid missing the playoffs for the second consecutive season, they will need to win at least four of the five games left on the schedule. It's a daunting task, but after their performance on the road the last few weeks, it is one this Montana team seems capable of completing.

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